United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General, in response to January Summit of Security Council, issues "An agenda for Peace" report, proposing broad changes in United Nations peace and security role.

+ United Nations is consulting with Governments of Azerbaijan and Armenia on possibility of opening interim offices in their capitals before next General Assembly session, according to United Nations spokesman.

+ United Nations fact-finding mission to Moldova expected to leave New York at end of week.

+ Secretary-General announces temporary interruption of Cyprus talks during his absence from Headquarters; meetings to resume on 15 July.

+ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees suspends repatriation operations of refugees in Afghanistan as 10,000 return home daily; lack of funds reported.

+ Secretary-General, in addendum to report of 26 May, announces end of impasse over El Salvador Peace Accords; new dates for implementation of timetable set.

+ First allocation of $2 million from Secretary-General's Emergency Fund to go to drought-stricken Kenya.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today issued a 24-page report entitled "An Agenda for Peace" containing an integrated programme of proposals aimed at enhancing the United Nations role in dealing with ongoing and future conflicts. The report was prepared in response to the first Summit Meeting of the Security Council at Headquarters on 31 January, at which Heads of State and Government of the 15 Council members asked the Secretary-General to submit, by 1 July, recommendations on how to improve the United Nations's capacity for preventive diplomacy, peace-making and peace-keeping.

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In the area of preventive diplomacy, the Secretary-General recommends the increased use of confidence-building measures among parties to potential, current or past disputes, and within regional organizations. He calls for fact-finding, whether initiated by the Secretary-General or by the Security Council or the General Assembly, as well as the establishment of an early warning system that could assess possible threats to peace and point to a suitable United Nations response. He suggests utilizing the "preventive deployment" of United Nations forces at parties' request in order to deter cross-border attacks or to prevent hostilities within a country.

To ensure a more active peace-making role for the Organization, the Secretary-General calls for continued use of the means envisaged by the Charter -- mediation, negotiation, arbitration -- and invites not only the Security Council but also the General Assembly to take full part in these efforts. Greater reliance should be placed on the International Court of Justice as a resource for the peaceful adjudication of disputes, he states.

With regard to the use of military force by the United Nations, the Secretary-General points out that Chapter VII of the Charter gives the Security Council the power to take whatever action necessary -- including the use of air, naval or ground forces -- to restore international peace and security in the face of a "threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression". He notes that the Council has not so far made use of the most coercive of those measures -- the action by military force foreseen in Article 42. That option, he stresses, is "essential to the credibility of the United Nations as a guarantor of international security". In that connection, under special agreements foreseen in Article 43, Member States would make armed forces available to the Council not only on an ad hoc basis but also on a permanent basis.

Recognizing that such forces are not likely to be available for some time to come, and in view of the fact that the task of United Nations forces called upon to maintain a cease-fire on occasion exceeds the mission of peace-keeping, the Secretary-General recommends that the Council consider creating a new category of United Nations forces: "peace-enforcement units". Such units would be deployed by the Security Council as a provisional measure under Article 40 of the Charter in clearly defined circumstances and with their terms of reference specified in advance. They would consist of trained troops that would be more heavily armed than peace-keeping forces and that would have volunteered for such service.

With regard to peace-keeping operations themselves, the Secretary-General states that these operations have doubled in number since 1987, noting the new problems that have emerged regarding logistics, equipment, personnel and finance. He urges the immediate establishment of a revolving peace-keeping reserve fund of $50 million and action by the General Assembly to speed up the financing of new operations. He also calls on the Assembly to encourage Member States to finance their peace-keeping contributions from defence, rather than foreign affairs, budgets. Regarding the question of assuring long-term financial security to the Organization, the Secretary-General states that he has asked a select group of persons to examine the entire subject and

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that he intends to present their advice to the Assembly, which is responsible for financial and budgetary matters.

A further area for change in the United Nations' security role is the question of cooperation with regional preventive, peace-making and peace-keeping efforts. Noting that regional arrangements have not been considered in this light in recent decades, the Secretary-General underscores that consultations between the United Nations and such arrangements or agencies could do much to build consensus on the nature of a problem and the remedial measures required.

Among his recommendations for the Security Council itself, the Secretary-General suggests that Heads of State and Government of the Council members meet every two years, preceding the Assembly's General debate, in order to stimulate ideas on how the United Nations may best serve to "steer change into peaceful courses".

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The United Nations has begun consultations with the Governments of Azerbaijan and Armenia to open two interim offices in the capitals, a United Nations spokesman said today.

The offices are a joint project of the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and will serve the purposes of development and public information. The spokesman said it was hoped that the two offices would be operational before the General Assembly session, next September.

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A United Nations spokesman said today that the fact-finding mission to Moldova would be led by Gilberto Schlitter, Director in the Department for Political Affairs, and would leave New York at the end of the week.

Yesterday, in a statement issued at Headquarters, the Secretary-General deplored the escalation of violence in Moldova, affecting hundreds of people over the last few days, and called on the parties to end the senseless fighting and observe the utmost restraint.

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In a press communiqué issued tonight at Headquarters, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali announced that the proximity talks with the leaders of the two communities in Cyprus - started on 18 June - were being interrupted during his absence from Headquarters. The talks are to resume on 15 July.

To date, the Secretary-General has held five meetings with each leader during which they initiated discussions on the various issues of an overall framework agreement on Cyprus, in line with the Security Council resolution 750 (1992). The communiqué has called these talks "constructive and helpful".

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is quickly running out of funds as more than 70,000 Afghan refugees return home every week in the largest spontaneous repatriation movement ever seen.

According to a report from the UNHCR in Geneva, the Agency had less than $400,000 available and it had spent $250,000 every day to aid the refugees. More than 16,000 Afghans crossed the border on Sunday alone, receiving a UNHCR cash grant of $135 per family as well as a World Food Programme (WFP) food allotment. The Agency said that the huge outflow of funds had depleted UNHCR's reserves and repatriation activities had to be suspended.

Recently, the Secretary-General launched an appeal for $180 million for immediate aid to war-devastated Afghanistan, which included $52.8 million for UNHCR's repatriation operation. Since the upsurge, the Agency said it has received some $5.5 million, but there has been very little response to the appeal so far.

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The representatives of the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberacíon Nacional (FMLN) have now resolved the issues that had delayed the implementation process of the Peace Agreement of 16 January 1992, according to the Secretary-General. Certain of the dates mentioned in the implementation timetable of the Peace Agreement, which had not been complied with, had now been reajusted.

In an addendum to his report on the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), dated 26 May, the Secretary-General announced the arrangements which were finalized on 12 June. According to the report, by 25 June, the forces of both sides will be concentrated at locations designated for them; by 30 June, the first contingent of former FMLN combatants will begin their reintegration into civilian life; within 15 days after 30 June, the National Academy for Public Security will begin its first training course for recruites of new civilian new police force; by 30 June, the Government will present to the Legislative Assembly a bill for the abolition of the National Guard and Treasury Police and the establishment of a "Special Brigade for Military Security"; by 30 June, the Government will propose to reform the Electoral Code in order to legalize the FMLN as a political party; by 15 July, the Government will finalize programs for the reintegration of FMLN combatants into civilian life; by 30 June, the verification of the inventory of lands presented by the FMLN to the National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (COPAZ) will commence.

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Drought-stricken Kenya is to receive the first allocation of $2 million from the newly established $50 million Central Emergency Revolving Fund. The contribution was approved by the Secretary-General on 18 June.

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The allocation was made to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), which will use the funds to provide water, emergency drugs, vaccines and shelter in the north and northeastern areas of Kenya. In those areas, two years of drought, combined with massive influxes of refugees from Somalia, Ethiopia and, most recently, Sudan, have resulted in severe food and water shortages.

Due to the severity of conditions in Kenya and the continued influxes of refugees -- now totalling more than 300,000 persons, the Secretary-General launched a special consolidated appeal calling for some $97 million to cover only the most pressing needs of drought-affected persons and refugees. Assessments of needs to determine additional funds required, particularly in the non-food relief sectors, are currently continuing.

The Central Emergency Revolving Fund was established by General Assembly resolution on 19 December 1991, as a cash-flow mechanism to ensure rapid response from the United Nations system in providing emergency assistance. It is financed by voluntary contributions and will be used to make advances to the operational organizations of the United Nations system.

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